



NEWS

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NNSA and Egypt to Cooperate on Preventing Nuclear Smuggling

NNSA Megaports Program Coming to Egypt

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The United States signed a Declaration of Principles today with the government of Egypt to help thwart smuggling of nuclear and other radioactive material. The declaration was cosigned by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA). The document covers implementation of CBP's Container Security Initiative and NNSA's Megaports Initiative, as both programs continue working together to stop nuclear material from being smuggled to U.S. ports. Three other joint DOE-CBP declarations of principles have been signed with the Sultanate of Oman, and the governments of Honduras and Jamaica.

NNSA Administrator Linton Brooks stated, "It is critical for international security and the stability of the global economy that seaports have the capability to screen cargo for nuclear material that could be smuggled by terrorists. Through partnerships like today's declaration with the government of Egypt, we will be able to detect and deter illicit materials from being transported through the international maritime system."

NNSA's Megaports Initiative is aimed at preventing illicit shipments of nuclear and other radioactive material through the global maritime system. Under this important nonproliferation program, NNSA works with foreign partners to install specialized radiation detection equipment and enhance the capabilities to detect, deter and interdict illicit shipments of nuclear and other radioactive materials at international ports. The Megaports Initiative is currently operational in six countries, and at various stages of implementation and negotiations with approximately 30 other countries around the world.

Under the Container Security Initiative (CSI), CBP stations multidisciplinary teams of U.S. officers from CBP and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to work with their host government counterparts to establish security criteria to identify high-risk containers. Their mission is to target and pre-screen containers destined for the United States.

"Preventing the smuggling of illicit nuclear weapons and radiological materials remains CBP's highest priority," said CBP Commissioner W. Ralph Basham. "CSI is a brilliant idea that serves the interests of both business and security. Through the workings of CSI, we must and will achieve our collective twin goals of security and trade facilitation."

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CSI is operational in 44 ports in North America, Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and North, South, and Central America. Approximately 75 percent of cargo containers headed to the U.S. now originate in or are transshipped from CSI ports.

To expedite the inspection process, host customs administrations are required to provide non-intrusive technology to quickly inspect any identified high-risk containers before they are shipped to U.S. ports. The capabilities provided under the Megaports Initiative offer an additional targeting tool for customs officials supporting CSI.

The Declaration of Principles is aimed at detecting and deterring illicit trafficking of nuclear and other radioactive materials by smugglers and terrorists. Similar partnerships exist with the Netherlands, Greece and other nations. Representatives from Europe, Asia, South America, the Middle East and the Caribbean are in active discussions with the United States to install radiation detection systems at key port facilities worldwide to further international nonproliferation efforts and provide useful evidence to support prosecution efforts.

Established by Congress in 2000, NNSA is a semi-autonomous agency within the U.S. Department of Energy responsible for enhancing national security through the military application of nuclear science. NNSA maintains and enhances the safety, security, reliability and performance of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile without nuclear testing; works to reduce global danger from weapons of mass destruction; provides the U.S. Navy with safe and effective nuclear propulsion; and responds to nuclear and radiological emergencies in the U.S. and abroad.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the management, control, and protection of our Nation's borders at and between the official ports of entry. CBP is charged with keeping terrorists and terrorist weapons out of the country while enforcing hundreds of U.S. laws.

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